

DOT Safety Meeting
August 4, 2010 -- Meeting Notes
Mo Hansen, Clerk/Treasurer

ATTENDING

LeAnna Wall	John Oimoen	Randy Henke	Will Behnke
Shawn Arnold	Marlin Hensler	Lee Hellenbrand	Tim Thomas
Laura Cotting	Dave Markvardt	John Lichtenheld	Garret Perry
Keri Sellnow	Mo Hansen		

OIMOEN: DOT wants local information now. DOT won't have answers to questions by Aug 19th but is committed to face-to-face meetings. Phone conference calls are OK, but not preferred. Regarding Crossings? A Diagnostic Team to make recommendations.

HENKE: The Diagnostic Team is starting August 20th at Dayton Street in Watertown and working to Madison. A signal inventory and inventory has taken place. This will be followed by Diagnostic Team and highway design. Multiple variables determine rail crossings recommendations. After the recommendation, DOT will work with communities, then the Office of the Commissioner of Railroads.

HENKE ON WHISTLE FREE ZONES – Two gate minimum plus supplemental safety items required. The whole corridor is being designed to this standard; a community applies for the status and must take action to annually (?) keep the status. See quiet zone calculator at FRA website for calculator. Each crossing is unique but uniform standards apply. State to build to the quiet zone standard. The municipality applies & reaffirms every two years or so. City can pick and choose minimum where. Minimum section is one-half mile. See specific requirements. State will maintain the crossing that they install. Whistle free does not apply to towns. Not mandatory to have quiet zone. Crossing will be all concrete.

HENKE: Crossing gate location? Henke defines criteria: signal clearly visible, no obscuring signal. Go to North Carolina DOT high speed rail site for a model of minimum standards for crossings & for corridor standards. Pedestrian crossings design still being debated internally by DOT. Decisions to be made. Bike paths handled in a different manner.

HENKE: Cattle crossing type pedestrian designs – tough on bikes & tough for snow. Your input now is important. Sight triangles are also a requirement. Pilasters show in Perry drawings are in the sight triangle as drawn. We can't camouflage the crossings. We need to get standards and marry them into the local ideas.

PERRY: The goal is to make people aware of crossings.

HENSLER: Will crossings be standardized? HENKE: They will try to make a standard and then look at exceptions for unique crossing? Geometry, approach, sight distances are very important. Physical characteristics affect standards. The railroad property needs to achieve the sight lines. Bermed topography may affect sight lines. The road's profile may be redone to meet current standard. Waterloo is close to existing grade.

HENKE: Plan & profile, curvature, signal and to DOT for portions of corridor submitted last night... (not-Waterloo). More detail in the works. A few more soil borings to be done in Waterloo. DOT is going back to look at the whole thing design because new design standards are in place since the earlier Environmental Assessment. DOT is looking closely at four or five switches. A determination needs to be made on how much change will occur to the bridge over STH 19 (an upgrade or replacing the deck is being considered). The bridge near Briess will be rebuilt.

HENKE: In Waterloo minor realignment readjustments are warranted. From Washington to Jackson is one area Henke is looking at for slight realignment. He is confident DOT can stay in the right-of-way. Two areas to fix: take

two west switches out in middle of curve and moving east end (Washington – Jackson). This affects keeping the sidings. “They may need to make an exception” in this case. Decisions may occur within the next month .

LICHTENHELD: What is the process regarding switches? City participation? HENKE: It is the decision of DOT & Rail Company (WSOR).

HENKE: For Waterloo DOT is being designed to 79 mph. Marshall is being designed to 110 mph. ARNOLD: What about issues with the Marshall spur? HENKE: We’ll be back with concerns. Buildings near STH 73 are problematic.

SIDINGS STUDIES?? OIMOEN: Share all information? PERRY: We are seeking an accommodation for a siding.

HENKE REGARDING SIDINGS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: At FRA’s direction – we won’t preclude known conditions. We need to be shown what the concerns are... Are they or aren’t they current concerns. They won’t put in switches in for a “what if” situation. But future consideration can be written in. Accommodations greatly affect the signal system. Costly. This is most important when looking at sidings.

COMMUTER STOP? PERRY: Potential item. We have gone through the process of identifying where they would be? WALL THOUGHTS ON COMMUTER: not on a curve, consider transit lines. WALL: Start with TRANSIT 2020 standards. COTTING: The area between Harrison & Jackson was defined as the location for the potential stop. WALL: Forward sighting information.

SAFETY BETWEEN INTERSECTIONS? PERRY: What about the idea of plantings instead of fencing? What are options for fencing? HENKE: Fencing needs to go where ingress/egress and control are a concern. Diagnostic Team will do crossings and Safety Team will look at the rest. Thinking has changed from fencing the whole thing to partial fencing. This will be covered in the Corridor Management Plan. Fences can be a two–edge sword. They keep people in and out. PERRY: Can a planting barrier be an option? OIMOEN: We need to go back and look at this. There is time to figure this out. HENKE: We need to get with communities on this; not 100% chain link fence. OIMOEN: The Corridor Management Plan is something that we’ll work together on. HENKE: On-going maintenance must be thought through. There are strict FRA rules on working within the rail corridor. The City doesn’t want to get their people railroad certified to trim a bush. PERRY: They’ll just spray chemicals? HENKE: Yes. The goal is to keep the ballast section weed free. A 25 foot swath; otherwise it is likely typical maintenance. OIMOEN: The North Carolina website is a very good resource to review.

OVERPASSES? PERRY: We see an opportunity for an overpass on Van Buren Street.

HANSEN: What about Lewellen Street in Marshall? WALL: Lewellen will be kept open.

ROAD CLOSURES? LICHTENHELD: Look at it as a system when considering road closures and overpasses. PERRY: It would be valuable to show the data on proposed closures? HENKE: The Diagnostic Team will look at current DOT ADT (traffic count) figures.

HANSEN: How does the Diagnostic Team interact with community comprehensive plans? OIMOEN: Forward information to LeAnna Wall.

HENSLER: When will gates closing start? HENKE: Twenty seconds in advance of the train regardless of speed. Train speed typically will be increased on an incremental basis so people get used to faster trains. OIMOEN: A big public safety campaign will take place prior to service.

OIMOEN: The next meeting can be set for the interactive process regarding overpasses, etc... PERRY: Do we have input on crossings? OIMOEN: Yes. We want to have that information regarding crossings.

FREIGHT? PERRY: How fast for freight? Timing? OIMOEN: 30 to 40 mph? HENKE: Freight will be designed to run at a maximum of 60 mph. They typically won't run at max speed because of engine size, weight, etc... The downtown "run around" won't be in town as it currently is, but at Michaels Quarry location outside of town. Michaels is the biggest business. WSOR has good plans. Freight will grow.

HANSEN: Briess would like to bring in 50 cars at time rather than two currently. HENKE: That will be a challenge.

PERRY: Gate Closures for freight? HENKE: Train will clear through town quicker -- an improvement. HENKE: The gate's down position is the fail safe position. COTTING: What is the contingency for gate failure? HENKE: They won't fail simultaneously.

NEXT MEETING? OIMOEN: LeAnna will call with additional dates. HENKE: We want to move quickly. HENKE: Send LeAnna Wall information. PERRY: When is the best time to work on the Priority List? OIMOEN: Design items are a priority. Other items can wait because there is time.

ITEMS MENTIONED IN SUMMARY: Sidings; long-range plans; Comprehensive Plan. Lichtenheld to forward documents. Others will as well.

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